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SUBJECT: FRENCH ENVIRONMENT NEGOTIATOR UNDERSTANDS US ENGAGEMENT IN DECEMBER NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A) State 119282
B) State 99217

¶11. (SBU) Summary: French climate negotiator Brice Lalonde told EMIN that he understands that the new administration will need time to organize and he looks forward to working with Under Secretary Dobriansky in Poznan. EMIN also explained our position on the EU Renewable Fuels Directive, especially biofuels. End summary.

¶12. (SBU) On November 21, Brice Lalonde, the French principal climate negotiator, told EMIN and ESTH Counselor that he understands the background conveyed in REF A. Lalonde suggested that the new administration use new words, such as those used in the President-Elect's comments to the bipartisan governors' conference, to create an atmosphere in which the other nations would be more willing to make concessions. Lalonde said that Poznan will be most important for laying out a work agenda leading to the Copenhagen conference. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is said to want two or three heads of state meetings on climate change to provide authoritative guidance to negotiators. The GOF believes that the USG should host the final ministerial before Copenhagen. Some are speculating that the US may want to first pass domestic legislation before committing to an international agreement. Finally, Lalonde hopes that the Major Economies Meetings (MEM) will continue to be convened during the year. Lalonde asserted that "China is key" to a Copenhagen protocol, and in an economic downturn, European industry, already fatigued, will not agree to indirectly subsidize Chinese industry.

¶14. (SBU) EMIN closed by explaining the US position on the proposed EU Renewable Fuels directive, especially the section on the criteria for biofuels, where trade barriers might be erected against some kinds of foreign biofuels by using non-scientific criteria. Lalonde was familiar with OECD work in this area, and hoped that the EU domestic politics would facilitate a scientifically-based directive.

Stapleton